



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA):

EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT FOR TANF PARTICIPANTS¹

FY 05-06 FUNDING

(18 Months)

SUB-GRANT NUMBER GBEN-05-02

Information Document for Application Guidance and Requirements

APPLICATION DEADLINE: 5 p.m. October 7, 2004

Letter Of Intent to Apply: September 13, 2004

Pre-Application Sessions:

1:00 to 3:00, August 24, 2004 in Roanoke

10:00 to Noon and 1:00 to 3:00 PM, August 30, 2004 in Richmond

¹ TANF -- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

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I. INTRODUCTION

Through this document, the Virginia Department of Social Services' (VDSS) announces the Request for Applications (RFA) for the ***Employment Advancement for TANF Participants Sub-grant: GBEN-05-02*** and provides information, guidance, and requirements for applications. This section specifies eligible applicants, available funding, key dates for the process, and contacts for technical assistance. Section II gives guidance on the services sought and program requirements. Section III provides information on the preparation and submission of an application; Section IV, the review process and criteria for awards; and Section V, the agreement, method of payment, and reporting requirements. Appendices provide additional information. The **TANF PROPOSAL TEMPLATE** provides the actual application forms and outline to use in developing a proposal and is available online as a separate *PDF/Word* document: www.dss.state.va.us under the link for Grant Opportunities and this sub-grant announcement.

The geographic coverage of the RFA is statewide. Below are key dates for this sub-grant solicitation:

LETTER OF INTENT (<i>optional</i>)	To be submitted by September 13 th
INFORMATION SESSIONS (<i>optional</i>)	August 24 th in Roanoke (<i>afternoon session</i>) August 30 th in Richmond (<i>two sessions</i>)
PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DATES:	Proposals will be received through 5:00 PM October 7, 2004.
AWARDS:	Late October 2004 with funds available from December 1, 2004 through May 31, 2006

Applicants may submit **ONLY ONE** proposal; but an organization may be a participant/partner in multiple proposals.

A. PURPOSE OF THE RFA

The purpose of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to solicit proposals for **proven** service approaches and strategies that help current and former TANF clients (including those with multiple barriers to becoming employed) prepare to enter, succeed, and advance in the workplace. The intent is to provide resources to expand and enhance existing service delivery efforts to address more fully the needs of the TANF population prior to entry into work and during employment. The Commonwealth intends for the key outcomes of this initiative to be improved job placement, improved job retention, higher entered employment wages, and increased wage gains and job advancement over time of current and former TANF clients. Proposals may include, but are not limited to:

- Comprehensive assessments (including utilization of psychologists and clinicians) that help identify strengths, diagnose disabilities, and determine any treatment and accommodations required;
- Services that stabilize an individual's situation so that he/she can participate in or retain employment and/or seek alternative financial resources such as Social Security Income;
- Intensive work preparation or work adjustment services, including education and skills training, community work experience placements, and on the job training;
- Job development and placement services including sectoral initiatives, subsidized employment, and the development of industry-based career ladders;
- Other services that support individuals retaining employment and/or obtaining higher wages, health benefits, and/or jobs with a career path.

B. FUNDING AVAILABLE AND SUB-GRANT PERIOD

The total funds available for the Biennium are about \$11.5 million. The RFA process is following the guidance specified for the Competitive Sub-grant program language in the 2004 Appropriation Act [page 292, Item 365(2)]. The sub-grant program will be used to provide services “to engage present and former TANF recipients in activities to achieve and maintain self sufficiency. The grants shall comply with federal TANF laws and regulations. The grant program shall use criteria that will ensure grants are awarded statewide and to organizations that have a proven record of effectively delivering services and leveraging private and public sector dollars to carry out activities.”

Awards will be made for an 18-month period, effective December 1, 2004 through May 30, 2006. The time period spans two fiscal years: FY 2005 and FY 2006. Awards may be renewed for up to two years thereafter. The Department will announce awards in October 2004.

C. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants are:

- Local departments of social services
- Incorporated nonprofit and for-profit organizations
- State agencies
- Local government entities in Virginia
- Educational institutions
- Faith-based organizations

A variety of options exist for the development of proposals. Proposals may vary and can include any combination of eligible applicants. An applicant can submit only one proposal; however, the same applicant may be a partner and participant in another application.

Submission of a group proposal (or expansion of an existing program) is strongly encouraged wherever feasible for services, economies of scale and/or the geographic coverage of partner agencies. The proposals may be as simple as identifying the types of services to be purchased, with the identification of localities to participate and participating vendors.

Where multiple organizations are involved in one proposal, a lead agency and fiscal agent must be identified. If an Applicant uses a partner local department of social services (LDSS) as the fiscal agent, the LDSS designated as the agent will need to sign an additional document after the award that confirms compliance with fiscal requirements. Once an award is made, the lead agency must also identify a program contact if not already specified in the proposal.

All applicants who have previously received funds from the Department must be in good standing to be considered for these grants.

D. APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Download the TANF Proposal Template from www.dss.state.va.us, and adhere to the requirements specified in both this document and the Template. Section II of this document identifies the services to be funded, population to be served, and use of funds, while Section III provides more information on the proposal content and submission requirements.

2. **Intent to Apply**: By **September 13, 2004**, interested applicants are requested to submit by email (preferred) or letter their plan to apply. This will help the Department prepare for the review process. The following information is requested:

Applicant Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Geographic Area to be covered:

Expected focus (*indicate all applicable*):

☐ Assessment ☐ Work Preparation ☐ Treatment Intervention ☐ Job Placement

☐ Job Retention ☐ Job Advancement ☐ Other (*specify*): _____

Other (probable) community partners:

The Intent-to-Apply communication should be sent as follows:

Email: tanf.grant@dss.virginia.gov or

Fax: 804-726-7946 Attention: Barbara Cotter

Mail: Barbara Cotter

Virginia Department of Social Services

Division of Benefit Programs, 3rd Floor

7 North Eighth Street

Richmond, VA 23219

3. Prepare the application. See TANF Proposal Template and instructions within this document. Copies of the sub-grant announcement (Information Document for Application Guidance and Requirements), Appendices for this document, and the TANF Proposal Template can be downloaded from the VDSS website: www.dss.state.va.us.

4. Submit the application no later than 5:00 pm, Thursday, October 7, 2004. No applications will be accepted by facsimile or considered complete if only sent electronically. Applications received after the deadline will **not** be considered. Send or hand-deliver three

completed applications with original signatures and one copy (according to directions in Section III) to:

Barbara Cotter
Virginia Department of Social Services
Division of Benefit Programs, 3rd Floor
7 North Eighth Street
Richmond, VA 23219

In addition, an electronic version (according to specifications in Section III) is to be submitted to:

tanf.grant@dss.virginia.gov

Awards are competitive, based upon the criteria set forth in Section IV of this RFA.

E. INFORMATION SESSIONS -- OPTIONAL

VDSS will hold three optional informational sessions for potential applicants:

August 24, 2004 – Roanoke City (one session)

Time: 1:00 to 3:00 PM

Location: Higher Education Center, VA Tech -- See Appendix A for instructions.

August 30, 2004 – Richmond Area (two sessions)

First Session: 10:00 to noon

Second Session: 1:00 to 3:00 PM

Location: Short Pump Shopping Center in Henrico County (off Rte 64 at Short Pump and on West Broad Street) -- See Appendix A for instructions.

F. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Sub-grant award notices will also be published on this website. If you have additional questions regarding this RFA, please contact staff at tanf.grant@dss.virginia.gov. You may also contact directly: Barbara Cotter (804.726.7910) or Faye Palmer (804.726.7938).

Electronic mail is the preferred method of communication for questions and answers.

Summaries of questions and answers and any revision to the grant announcement will be posted weekly on the website.

II. PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND REQUIREMENTS

A. PRIORITY AREAS

Section IA (pages 3-4) addressed the purpose of the RFA and broad areas that may be addressed in a proposal. These sub-grants will help address several priority areas:

- Establishing a continuum and wide array of services statewide, including specialized employment services, to better serve TANF clients and support job entry and continued employment.
- Offering the range and depth in assessment and services that help enhance Virginia's implementation of the Americans for Disability Act (ADA) within the social service system.
- Providing services necessary to improve job retention and wage/job advancement.

To sustain efforts in the long-term, emphasis should be on developing and implementing services that can be sustainable without grant funding and which expand the service infrastructure. Although not required, consideration should be given to purchase of service models using pay-for-performance and/or per service unit/person rate. These strategies can help expand the service infrastructure and permit usage of scarce resources on an as needed basis.

This RFA allows responsiveness to individual variation across the Commonwealth and permits, as noted in Item D, requests for a waiver from policy regulations.

B. TANF POPULATIONS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SERVICES

The TANF clients eligible for services fall into one of the following statuses.

1. Recipients of TANF cash assistance who are in the employment program – **VIEW** (Virginia's Initiative for Employment Not Welfare), including those sanctioned.
2. Recipients of TANF cash assistance who are exempted from VIEW, called **VIEW-Exempt**.
3. Individuals receiving diversionary assistance under the TANF program.
4. TANF clients whose cash assistance has ended and are now in the Transitional period, up to 24 months after the end of TANF cash assistance.

Proposals may serve TANF clients who are in a specific status or any of the statuses.

Given the wide diversity of the eligible population, proposals may target one or more specific populations defined by other characteristics including education level, the presence of a disability or mental health issue, individuals with a poor job retention history, etc.

C. GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

As noted in Item A above, statewide coverage is an important consideration for the Department to increase services available for TANF clients and to support enhanced efforts to meet ADA requirements. Proposals should cover as many jurisdictions as feasible to support statewide services and for economies of scale. The order of priorities where feasible and/or required to address special needs are:

- Statewide
- Regional or district-wide
- Individual locality

To the extent feasible by the applicant pool, the Department intends to achieve a regional balance in new services funded by this RFA.

D. TANF POLICY WAIVER

Applicants may propose to request to waive state TANF program regulations for the proposed services. This must be identified and justified in the proposal narrative, with documentation reflecting support of all affected LDSSs. See Appendix B for more information on the Policy Waiver process.

E. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

TANF Population

As noted in Section B, the TANF population is quite diverse both within and across localities. Some may have moved readily into the workforce. Other clients may face only one or two issues that impede employment, while others may face six to ten. Those with significant issues often need stabilization services before they can enter or fully participate in the workforce, as well as specialized employment services to support a work placement and ongoing employment.

Client issues are both personal and family/situational in nature and may include:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| • Learning Disabilities | • Social Issues |
| • Substance Abuse | • Domestic Violence |
| • Mental Illness | • Family Issues |
| • Mental Retardation | • Limited English Proficiency |
| • Low Educational Levels | • Transportation |
| • Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder | |
| • Medical (Physical) Problems | |

Many receiving cash assistance and participating in VIEW have one or more physical or mental impairments. The General Accounting Office has estimated nationally the incidence of impairments in the TANF population to be over 40 percent, including families with a child who has a disability. Virginia's services to the TANF clients have revealed the presence of many different disabilities in this population, with many determined most significant based on the

Department of Rehabilitative Services' (DRS) evaluations. Disabilities have included: learning disabilities, other cognitive impairments, mental health issues, substance abuse issues, orthopedic problems, health issues, and other impairments. Cognitive impairments and mental health issues have been identified most frequently.

Research has shown the correlation between education and earnings. Some TANF clients have a GED and have moved readily into the workforce. However, others lack a GED and some have very limited skills in math, reading and writing. Some communities have many who have limited or no English proficiency.

The TANF work requirements and lifetime limits to benefits, key elements of welfare reform, pose challenges for the local social service departments as they attempt to address the unique needs of individuals with disabilities and /or other issues and help parents move to work and fulfill their potential.

See Appendix C for statewide and locality data regarding the number of TANF cash assistance participants, number of VIEW on cash assistance, number of VIEW already employed and off cash assistance, number of TANF Diversionary cases, average wage, job retention information, and child care utilization rates.

ADA Guidance

Recent guidance received from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office for Civil Rights, clarifies the responsibility of states' TANF programs to comport with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Some former welfare recipients have successfully moved into employment despite extraordinary obstacles. However, others, due to known or unrecognized disabilities, need additional training, accommodations, and support services to prepare for, or succeed at work. The current practice of exempting individuals with disabilities, which was carried over from the employment services program under the former Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program, is now viewed as a discriminatory exclusion and contrary to the TANF philosophy that individuals are better off if provided with job and/or training opportunities rather than continued public assistance.

With appropriate screening, assessment and diagnostic work, and services, TANF recipients with 'hidden' disabilities (including those with temporary medical exemptions or partial disabilities) have often been able to secure and retain employment. Expansion of these services across the state will help more TANF adults with disabilities obtain and retain employment.

Job Retention and Job Advancement

TANF clients must develop better employment histories, as well as increase the quality of their jobs over time through higher wages, better benefit packages and greater job security. Job retention and career advancement are concerns that should be addressed both during preparation for entry into the workplace as well as post-placement. Retention and advancement strategies apply to:

- Individuals who face special issues and need extra preparation and support before entering the workforce,
- Those who find jobs,
- Those who have difficulty keeping jobs, and
- Those who can find only entry level, low wage or part-time employment.

Job retention and advancement strategies may vary as greatly as the individuals to be served. Some who have a poor work history may need assistance in transitioning to new positions so that changes help build a better employment record which can demonstrate their quality as workers. Finding better jobs can also help improve job attachment that can serve the interests of both the employee and the employer.

F. SERVICES REQUESTED

Proposals may focus on one service or may offer an array of services, using one or more providers. To the extent feasible given priorities stated in Section IIA, proposals should offer an array of services to enhance services for TANF clients that are responsive to their diverse needs, including changing situations related to different case/employment statuses. It is possible that:

- One proposal could include multiple providers for the same geographic area,
- Two or more proposals could cover a similar/overlapping geographic area, and each could include one or more providers in their respective applications. Their different service proposals could be complementary.

A proposal could include a combination of services purchased per individual (as needed) and other services that may require ongoing (new) staff (such as a clinical counselor at the community services board or an educator), depending on the projected volume.

Proposals that include hiring direct staff should provide a justification for the need for hiring personnel rather than offering services on a purchased basis.

Efforts should complement, enhance and be integrated with existing VIEW services, not supplant or duplicate current services.

It is expected that proposals would include one or more of the following services:

1. Comprehensive assessments, including diagnostic evaluations from licensed or certified professionals to determine specific impairments or issues
2. Vocational assessment and vocational evaluations
From DRS staff, certified vocational evaluator (CVE), licensed vocational evaluator
3. Situational assessments
From DRS-approved providers who maintain certification from CARF -- Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities
4. Medical case management

From individuals/organizations with medical credentials such as RN, certified rehabilitation provider --CRP, or certified disability management specialist -- CDMS

5. Interventions and/or treatment for substance abuse, mental health, physical disabilities, learning disabilities, etc.

6. Assistive technology and other accommodations

Determined by occupational therapist, rehabilitation counselor/engineer, speech and hearing specialist, psychologists usually for GED accommodations, others

7. Soft-skills development

8. Independent living skills

From DRS-approved providers

9. Intensive job readiness

10. Work adjustment training

From DRS-approved providers who maintain CARF certification

11. Job Skills Training

12. GED and basic education

13. Job analysis (may be part of vocational assessment or situational assessment)

14. Employer outreach , job development and expanding access to better jobs

15. Job placement

16. Job Coaching

From DRS-approved providers who maintain CARF certification

17. Enclave employment

18. Internships, Practicums, Work-study, Pre-Apprenticeships and Apprenticeships

19. On-the-Job Training

20. Supportive services

21. Job follow-up

22. Job “follow along”

From DRS-approved providers who maintain CARF certification

23. Transportation

24. SSI/SSDI Application Support

Note: Other services may be considered if they relate to the purpose and priorities of this sub-grant request. **Excluded** for consideration are child care services except where it supports another primary intervention strategy.

These services are described in Appendix D: Definitions for Services.

Some Service Models

Applicants may wish to consider the use of one or more identified “best practices” and service models as part of or the focus of their proposal. These practices and models have demonstrated improvements in service provision and/or increased employment of the TANF population. Some of these include:

- Comprehensive screening and assessments for diverse employment barriers, including needed diagnostic services. This could target VIEW clients only or address the needs of

a broader TANF population, including an early employability assessment of TANF clients prior to assignment to VIEW.

- Intensive work readiness program of at least a week to six weeks, possibly full-time, that addresses self-esteem and motivational issues, develops some computer skills, prepares individuals for work in terms of work goals and resume, provides a short work trial, and enhances educational level or specific job-required skills (e.g., reading, math). Some of these programs have used the Workplace Essential Skills program.
- “Bridges to Practice” projects, an inter-agency service model for identifying and addressing learning and other disabilities. It involves use of a psychologist and is most effective when combined with special interventions to improve employment outcomes.
- Other disability-focused employment projects use a team approach involving DRS, LDSSs, employment service organizations, and other vendors (e.g., community services boards) that offer an array of services from comprehensive assessments, work preparation, job placement, and job coaching through 90 to 180 days of continuous employment. While these initiatives have focused on individuals with disabilities, the model and its services are also relevant for individuals who face multiple issues.
- Training and education (such as Workplace Essential Skills – high quality, free software, tapes, and tools available on the Internet) when it is focused on the acquisition of one or more essential skills for a job, as well as GED preparation. These skills may focus on a specific area such as math, reading or writing.
- “MedVIEW” projects, a service model focused on those medically exempt from VIEW as well as VIEW clients with medical issues (including psychiatric issues that limit their ability to work). Through medical case management, health conditions and their impact on employment are evaluated. Individuals may be released to the VIEW program or receive other assistance tailored to their medical conditions.
- Sectoral initiatives which target a specific industry or employment sector and tie training, job placement, and post-employment services together to develop a pipeline of qualified workers who advance in their careers.
- Contextual learning initiatives that teach basic skills and workplace skills in an integrated work-learning model which teaches in using the workplace as the primary learning lab.
- Post-employment “service packages” which may include one or more of the following: job coaching/mentoring, retention bonuses (employers and/or employees), transportation assistance, skills training, and child care.
- Pay-for-performance job development, placement, and retention contracts.

More information is available on these and other strategies in Appendix E.

Expedited Implementation

It is the expectation that applicants will select service delivery methods that will facilitate expedient implementation of proposed services and that will facilitate sustaining efforts in the future. Some applicants may already have staff and be certified and are positioned to provide quality services right away; other applicants could consider use of sub-contractors which have staff and are ready to provide services. Other strategies may include:

- Continuation of an existing Hard-to-Serve or Job Retention/Job Advancement program that has had proven outcomes.
- Use of licensed social workers or certified clinicians for assessments and other areas.
- Implementation through purchased services where some or all services could be provided from a set of individual vendors such as psychologists, licensed social worker, employment service organizations, and centers for independent living that typically offer services on a unit/per person basis. Other organizations such as community services boards, domestic violence service providers, and/or community action agencies may also be able to offer services on a fee basis.

Consideration should be given to making services accessible to individuals and utilizing the “wrap-around” concept so that all services for one individual flow together smoothly regardless of the number of providers. Integrated case planning, case management, consumer choice, and timely service delivery are important components and should be addressed in the proposal.

Providers of Services

The diverse needs of the TANF population require multiple providers. Some services require the use of licensed or certified professionals. This should be considered in developing a proposal.

DRS’ network of providers may be useful for developing a proposal as they include many types of vendors, and these organizations and licensed/certified professionals offer many specialized services which may be needed by some TANF clients. While the services are usually used for individuals with disabilities, they may also be helpful for other individuals, particularly those who have multiple issues to resolve to stabilize their family and/or employment situation. DRS lists these vendors at their Web Site: <http://www.vadrs.org>. Employment service organizations (ESOs), centers for independent living (CILs), psychologists and other providers are a few; for the ESOs and CILs, the site also shows geographic coverage, services and rates. See Appendix F – Department of Rehabilitative Services’ Vendor List.

Other networks of services are the community services boards, providers associated with the workforce investment boards, health department and child development clinics, adult education system, community college system, community action agencies, and United Way providers. There are also specialized providers for transportation and other areas. Medicaid providers are another source of vendors.

G. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

To document success, all recipients of funding from this RFA must report on one or more outcome measures related to:

1. Number of VIEW participants who obtain employment
2. Increased hours of employment such as from part-time to full-time
3. Increased number of clients who exit the TANF program due to employment
4. Increased average hourly wage of clients
5. Increased rate of job retention – 90 days and 180 days and one year
6. Advancement in employment
7. Obtaining jobs with health insurance and/or other benefits
8. Obtaining Supplemental Social Security Income (SSI)
9. Obtaining a GED
10. Completion of treatment or milestone points
11. Other, to be defined by applicants.

Applicants are to specify all applicable outcomes in their proposal and to describe expected benefits.

H. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Firmly established and committed community partnerships are vital to the success of individual projects and service delivery as a whole. Many TANF clients need an array of services from many providers and benefit greatly from integrated case planning and service delivery. Proposals should include other service agencies or vendors that offer essential expertise and should outline the community partnerships relevant to the project design, including consumer groups and businesses. Key agencies for partnerships may include public and private providers of vocational rehabilitation services, employment service organizations, mental health and substance abuse agencies, domestic violence providers, adult education, community action agencies, faith-based groups, and many other private providers and clinicians.

Documentation of Partnerships

Applicants should provide evidence in the proposal related to community collaboration and the use of community services in service delivery. Proposals should include interagency agreement(s) or other comparable documents to demonstrate such collaboration. If other agencies are specifically responsible for implementing portions of the proposal, this should be defined in the Narrative section and reflected in an agreement.

Documentation of Interactions with LDSSs

Proposals should address essential interactions with LDSSs that cover one or more of the following areas, depending on applicability:

- Integration with the local VIEW plan(s) and other TANF initiatives and its expansion of the continuum of services,

- Use of a TANF policy waiver,
- Identification and referral of participants for proposed services,
- Case planning,
- Case management,
- Case monitoring or follow-up, and/or
- Reporting of status and outcomes for the Department's information system.

I. USE OF FUNDS AND MATCH

1. Funding Level

Funds are limited. Given the wide variety of services and potential combinations of geographic groupings and even statewide coverage, it is not possible to set a funding level. However, applicants should be reasonable in their request and recognize that funds need to support services across the state. It is expected that awards will be made that provides some statewide coverage.

2. Use of Funds

Sub-grant funds awarded through this RFA will only be used to cover costs appropriate to the program design, primarily services. Proposals should complement and not supplant or duplicate current VIEW-funded services. Wherever feasible and cost-effective, LDSS should utilize purchased services or other organizations should offer services on a rate basis (per person, units of service, performance outcomes). For all staff proposed, a justification should be included in the proposal that explains need, including volume of demand.

Funds may be used for:

- Core staff in support of program activities; this includes core staff involved in program design, development, and implementation. Funds for staff are limited to the personnel working directly with the TANF recipients or developing program resources on their behalf, and other expenses (such as services and materials) for the TANF recipients who are participants in the proposed program;
- Equipment in support of project activities;
- Consultation, technical assistance or staff training related to project;
- Evaluation of a medical condition, suspected or otherwise (medical, psychological, psychiatric, and dental);
- Adaptation of an employment site or equipment related to the project that accommodates an individual's needs for work;
- Medical Services (Limited, as a last resort -- only if not covered by other funds and if such expenditures are tracked and reported separately from other costs so they may be charged to TANF "Maintenance of Effort" funds. Estimated costs must be identified separately in the proposal.);
- Other allowable direct costs associated with the project such as supplies, travel, communications; and
- Costs related to assistive technology needs of the persons served.

Funds may not be used for:

- Salaries of VIEW staff;
- Administrative costs not specifically designated above; rent unless the project requires rental of space and such need is documented;
- Construction of new buildings;
- Renovations to a facility;
- Indirect costs; and
- Capital investment or operating revenue.

See Appendix G for TANF requirements.

3. Matching Funds and Other Funds

The Department would like to expand the available resources by leveraging grant funds. To this end, applicants with non-grant funds will be scored higher than those only using these grant funds. Applicants will need to identify all funds used: sub-grant, other federal, VDSS funds, other state government, local government, foundation, private, and funds generated by the initiative. Applicants will need to describe the utilization of these funds in their proposal. Higher points will be awarded for those entities providing a non-state/non-federal match and/or maximizing a diverse pool of funds.

For some proposals related to medical services, applicants should consider what portion of the cost could be covered by the TANF clients' Medicaid coverage and should design the program so that the client's coverage could pay for part or all of needed services. The Department recognizes that this is a complicated and difficult process, but it is highly desirable to maximize TANF funds by making full use of Medicaid's coverage, particularly certain types and parts of services such as psychological evaluations, medical case management, mental health services, medical case management.

III. APPLICATION PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

This section identifies the application content and forms of a proposal and specifies the submission instructions.

A. APPLICATION CONTENT

The sub-grant application consists of the following forms and narrative documents:

1. Sub-grant Application Cover Sheet (*signature required*)
2. Table of Contents (*with pages noted*)
3. Key Project Contacts
4. Certification Of Compliance With General Sub-grant Conditions And Assurances (*signature required*)
5. Federal Assurances Form SF-424B (*signature required*)
6. Proposal Summary (one page)
7. Proposal Narrative (up to 15 pages)
 - a. Needs Assessment
 - b. Proposed Approach
 - c. Population to be Served
 - d. Outcomes (Employment and Employment-related)
 - e. Organizational, Staff, and Provider Qualifications
 - f. Collaborative Agreements
8. Implementation (up to 3 pages)
9. Budget (up to 7 pages)
 - a. Personnel Costs
 - b. Full Budget
 - c. Justification Narrative
10. Applicable Attachments (not counted in page limitations above) Depending on the proposal and number of participating localities and partners, these may include:
 - a. Position descriptions for positions to be funded through the RFA
 - b. Data for participating localities possibly related to:
 - i. Needs Assessment,
 - ii. Projected Participants and
 - iii. Outcomes
 - c. References
 - d. Interagency Agreements/Documents relevant to the application
 - e. Community Partners and Documentation of Support (*signatures required*)

In addition to addressing the items identified in this document, see the TANF Proposal Template for specific instructions on completing forms and providing requested information.

B. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

General Requirements

Applicants should use the TANF Proposal Template to develop a proposal and follow instructions and guidance within this document and in the Template. Proposals should be organized according to the list in IIIA above. To be considered for selection, applicants must submit a complete response to this RFA:

- Three copies, each with original signatures and each in a yellow 2-pocket folder (to be part of agreement for those awarded funds) of all documents noted in IIIA above
- One copy in a green 2-pocket folder, with clips but no staples
- One copy sent electronically in Word format to tanf.grant@dss.virginia.gov (Exclude items 4 and 5 above). It is understood that signatures will not be shown on this electronic version.

Applications must be signed by an authorized representative of the applicant. All information requested should be submitted. Failure to submit all information requested may result in VDSS' requiring prompt submission of the missing information and/or giving a lowered evaluation of the application. Applications which are substantially incomplete or lack key information may be rejected by the VDSS.

Proposals should be prepared simply and economically, and include a straightforward, concise description of capabilities to satisfy the requirements of the sub-grant solicitation. Emphasis should be on completeness and clarity of content. See below for more information on formatting.

Optional: Applicants may also submit one set of exhibits of past or current work related to the proposal. Such exhibits could include but are not limited to a brochure, PowerPoint presentation, video, and other documents that reflect organizational capabilities and/or the type of services proposed.

Specific Requirements on Format and Binding

The RFA Template has italicized instructions that provide additional guidance to the applicant. These instructions (*only the words in italics*) can be deleted from the document when the template is converted to a proposal. Other instructions are:

- Pages in the proposal should be numbered, beginning with page one for each set.
- A "header" should be used to indicate the applicant agency, project name, and broad geographic area (such as Coalfield, New River, etc.) served.

- The document should use Times New Roman font and be 12 pitch font in the text or 10- or 12-pitch font in tables. Margins should be one-inch for top and sides and .5 to one-inch for the bottom.

Three Originals: Each should be in a **yellow** 2-pocket folder with an outside label indicating the word 'ORIGINAL' and the organization name, title of proposal, proposed geographic area served, and date of submission. The proposal should be stapled (including attachments) and placed on the right side. Other documents may be placed in the left pocket.

Additional Copy: This set must be in a **green** 2-pocket folder. Place a label on the cover with the organization name, title of proposal, proposed geographic area served, and date of submission. **No staples** should be used in this set. Put the proposal on the right side and other documents in the left pocket.

If the applicant is sending one set of exhibits/documents or a list of exhibits/documents of past/current work related to the proposal, these should go in the left pocket of the green folder. Use a separate envelope if needed. See Proposal Template for more information on exhibits (Item E5, page 16).

Identification of Proposal Envelope: The signed proposals should be returned in an envelope or package addressed as follows:

Employment-Focused Services for the TANF Population
ATTN: Barbara Cotter
Virginia Department of Social Services
Division of Benefit Programs, 3rd Floor
Seven North Eighth Street
Richmond, VA 23219

IV. PROCESS OF REVIEW AND CRITERIA FOR AWARD

A. EVALUATION COMMITTEE

VDSS will establish one or more Evaluation Committees to evaluate proposals received by the closing deadline. The Committees will consist of VDSS staff and representatives from LDSSs, state agencies, private providers, and others knowledgeable about best practices for the requested services to benefit current and former TANF clients.

The evaluation process may involve additional subject-matter experts in the process. The Department may request additional technical assistance from any source and may include information from references and prior contractual work with VDSS.

Sub-grant applications will be screened by VDSS staff for completeness and responsiveness to the RFA. Any not deemed complete or responsive will not be forwarded to an Evaluation Committee.

B. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

The Evaluation Committees will review and score each proposal on the basis of its responsiveness to the sub-grant solicitation, the projected impact of the program/services, and the estimated cost. Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria.

1. Proposal Need Statement	15 points
2. Quality of Program Design/Proposed Services and Implementation Plan	25 points
3. Outcomes and Benefits Expected	25 points
4. Organizational, Staff and Provider Qualifications	20 points
5. Cost of Services and Match	15 points
Bonus Points	5 points

Specific Criteria to Be Used By Grant Reviewers:

1. Proposal Need Statement:	15 points
a. Evidence of need	
b. Demonstration of relationship between need and services proposed	
2. Quality of Program Design and Implementation Plan	25 points
a. Clear objectives	
b. Quality of programs/services	
c. Clarity of design/program operation	
d. Reflects “promising practices” and/or utilizes evidence-based practices	
e. Utilizes screening and diagnostic evaluations to detect and evaluate client issues (or problems), if appropriate	

- f. Demonstrated capability to implement proposal
- g. Provides detailed, realistic work plan and shows capacity to implement by December 1, 2004
- h. Demonstrates an interagency, collaborative approach to delivering timely services and achieving outcomes
- i. Documents appropriate interactions with LDSS' TANF program

3. Outcomes: 25 points

- a. Projected outcomes are reasonable and feasible for funding level, services, and population to be served
- b. Evidence in Proposal Narrative of service strategies that will produce projected outcomes
- c. Outcomes demonstrated in related prior work relevant to proposal and population to be served

4. Organizational, Staff and Provider Qualifications 20 points

- a. Qualifications of organization (applicant and any other providers) for proposed work
- b. Qualifications of staff for proposed work
- c. Track record of high performance demonstrated through quantifiable outcomes
- d. Leadership, including participation in and formation of partnerships

5. Cost of Services and Match 15 points

- a. Costs proposed are reasonable and support proposed activities, outputs and outcomes
- b. Utilizes diverse funding sources
- c. Provides a non-state or non-federal match
- d. Applicant agency, through administrative structure and past performance, demonstrates ability to maintain required records and fiscal accountability

Five additional "Bonus Points": Applications may receive up to five additional points when the proposal includes at least a 25% cash match from different funding sources (excluding VDSS funds) in the proposed services for TANF participants.

MAXIMUM AVAILABLE POINTS

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The Evaluation Committee may request additional information and may use other information such as references, prior contractual work with VDSS, and information from subject-matter experts. Committees may also make programmatic and budgetary recommendations for a sub-grant award, including partial funding for a proposal.

C. AWARDS

The Request for Applications process is a competitive process. Awards will be given to organizations deemed to have the best proposal based on a review of criteria defined within the RFA and negotiations of final terms. Negotiations may then be conducted with organizations recommended and may include a request for additional information and/or modification of the proposal design and costs. In the final set of awards, consideration will be given to apportionment of funds to ensure some coverage across the state.

The Department reserves the right to award single or multiple awards and to award all or some funds. Thus, an applicant may receive all, some or no funds. The Department may, with a written explanation, withdraw the RFA. The Department is not required to furnish a statement of the reason why a particular proposal was not deemed to be the most advantageous.

Announcement of Award: Upon the award or the announcement of the decision to award a performance agreement as a result of this RFA, VDSS will post awards online:
www.dss.state.va.us.

V. AGREEMENT, METHOD OF PAYMENT AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

A. THE AGREEMENT

Successful applicants will receive:

- An award letter, specifying the funds approved
- Statement of the Sub-grant Award that specifies key information, and
- Statement of Award Special Conditions (if applicable)

The applicant will need to sign and return the Sub-grant Award document. Any special conditions must all be addressed prior to requesting reimbursement.

B. METHOD OF PAYMENT

Sub-grantees shall be paid on a cost reimbursable basis. Actual expenditures shall be submitted pursuant to approved line item budget categories. The method of payment to be used will depend on the type of organization receiving funds or serving as the fiscal agent:

- If the sub-grantee or its fiscal agent is a local social services department, then the reimbursement will be handled through VDSS' statewide local financial system – LASER. Funds allocated to a LDSS for a proposal will be placed in LASER in a separate cost center for this program. The first allocation will be for FY2005 and the second, for FY2006. Reimbursements are handled on a monthly basis.
- If the sub-grantee is a state agency, then reimbursement will be handled through Virginia's Interagency Transfer system. Payments may be made monthly.
- If the sub-grantee is not a state agency or local social service department, then the sub-grantee will need to submit monthly/quarterly invoices to VDSS unless a local social services department is serving as the fiscal agent. For these sub-grantees:
 - Upon approval of the sub-grant award, the sub-grantee will be reimbursed for expenses on a **monthly** basis according to the terms of the sub-grant award. The applicant agency must be prepared to pay expenses as they are incurred and then submit expenditure statements/request for funds on a **monthly** basis to VDSS for reimbursement. The sub-grantee shall invoice the purchasing agency monthly on forms supplied by the purchasing agency and shall submit an expenditure statement/request for funds and financial report showing no services delivered if that is the case in any invoice period.
 - The sub-grantee should allow 30 days from the time expenditure statements/request for funds are received by the Department until reimbursement is received. If errors are found in the expenditure statements, the 30 days will be from the date errors are corrected. Expenditure statements/request for funds which are valid and correct shall

be processed and paid no later than thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of the expenditure statement/request for funds.

- Reimbursement shall be made electronically, using the Virginia Department of Account's Remittance Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). **All reimbursements will be deposited electronically through the Virginia Department of Account's Remittance Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) Virginia.** Successful applicants seeking reimbursement from the Department through the invoice process must be or become eligible to receive reimbursement through EDI. Application information for EDI can be found on the Department of Account's website: www.doa.state.va.us.

If the Department determines that payments have been made to an organization, its employees, assignees or sub-grantees for non-allowable expenses, or for work performed that is not in conformity with this Agreement or Department of Social Services Regulations, VDSS may withhold such amounts from the next reimbursement to be made.

C. DURATION OF FUNDING

As noted in Section I.B, funds will cross fiscal years. They will be contingent on available funding and acceptable performance of proposed services. There will be a sub-grant review at the nine-month point, and funding levels for the balance of the sub-grant period may be adjusted, based on the review. It may also result in termination of funding.

In the case of projects involving multiple social services agencies, the lead agency may request and have VDSS place the funds in each local budget.

The use of interagency agreements between an LDSS and another government entity is an acceptable means of transferring funds directly to specified agencies involved in the proposal of services.

D. REPORTING

The reporting will include financial reports (as noted in Item B), quarterly reports, data reporting, and 18-month report. The Department may also request one or more ad hoc reports on project status if needed. Organizations will also be required to maintain documentation of the program according to state and federal standards.

Financial Reporting

Financial reporting is described above under B. Method of Payment.

Quarterly Reports

Quarterly reports are required by all sub-grantees. The quarterly reports will include a statistical summary, a one to two page narrative, and a case study/success story. Barriers to meeting objectives outlined in the activities / outcome form shall be reported and solutions to such barriers shall be explored and included in the quarterly reports.

All recipients of funding from this RFA must provide statistical data to VDSS. Specific reporting instructions will be provided to recipients at a later date during training.

Summary data for Fiscal Year 2005 will need to be provided in the second quarterly report as these data are required for the Department Annual Report on Welfare Reform.

Data Collection

The basic data collection on individuals will be handled through the VDSS information system. Organizations may also need to provide a list of cases receiving services so that the Department can do additional data analysis. Specific reporting instructions will be provided on this.

18-Month Report

A final report will address the activities, outputs, outcomes and overall accomplishment during the funding year. The final report will be due June 30, 2006.

E. MONITORING

Throughout the sub-grant year, recipients of any funding may be monitored by VDSS staff through a review of required reports, documentation of eligible expenditures prior to disbursement of sub-grant funds, desk review of programmatic, administrative, and financial procedures and on-site visits. VDSS staff are available to provide technical assistance and training to sub-grant recipients.

As noted in C, the sub-grant review at the nine-month point may result in an adjustment to the funding level or termination of the sub-grant.

Documentation of Services

Each organization will be required to maintain documentation of all project activities required for case reviews and an audit. Documentation of services provided to all persons served should be maintained in the customer's individual file.

VI. APPENDICES

Appendix A:	Directions for Information Sessions
Appendix B:	Policy on Waiver of TANF Program Regulations
Appendix C:	Statistical Data on TANF Population, Statewide and by Locality
Appendix D:	Definitions of Services
Appendix E:	Background on Some “Best Practices” and Models
Appendix F:	Department of Rehabilitative Services’ Vendor List
Appendix G:	TANF Requirements

For the Appendices, go to www.dss.state.va.us and click on *Forms, Applications and Grants* in the header and then click on *Grant Opportunities* (on the left side) that will bring you to the TANF sub-grant announcement. Click on the listing for this grant and then click on and download (Word or PDF):

Appendices for the guidance document

You can also access by going to the *Special Alert* box on the right and click on the link for *Grant Opportunities*.